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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000516

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL CE UNHRC

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON UNCHR 61

REF: A. STATE 42847

1B. COLOMBO 451

Classified By: POL PMAHONEY. REASON: 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (SBU) Poloff delivered Ref A demarche to Sumedha Ekanayake, Assistant Director for UN and Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on March 11. Ekanayake identified child soldiers (Ref B) as an issue of particular concern and one that the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister will emphasize in his statement. In addition, the Foreign Minister will address steps taken by the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) to improve its human rights record, particularly with respect to torture/abuse of detainees.

¶2. (C) In keeping with past practice, Ekanayake expects the GSL would abstain from a resolution on Cuba. (Sri Lanka has abstained every year except 1999, when it voted against the resolution.) The GSL would "most probably" support resolutions on Belarus and DPRK. Despite "a growing understanding" within the GSL that too much time is spent on Israel in CHR proceedings, Ekanayake said that Sri Lanka's strong bilateral and regional relationships with some of the sponsors can make it difficult for the GSL to oppose such resolutions.

LUNSTEAD